

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 remain in this application. Claims 1-11 are rejected. Claims 1, 3, 9 and 11 are amended herein to clarify the invention.

Applicant herein traverses and respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejection of the claims cited in the above-referenced Office Action.

Claims 1, 4, 5 and 9-11 are rejected as obvious over Darrow (US 2,026,082) in view of Hasbro Interactive under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). The applicant herein respectfully traverses this rejection. For a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) to be sustained, the differences between the features of the combined references and the present invention must be obvious to one skilled in the art.

Applicant believes the rejection is based upon a misunderstanding in claim language, rather than a substantive meeting of the intended claim limitations by the alleged teachings of the proffered combination of references. The confusion lies in the use of the term "appearance," which in the context of the claim recitation as presented earlier is subject to two interpretations: either (1) that the step of controlling appearance serves to control or adjust how a particular square appears, i.e., how it looks, or (2) controlling whether or not the production square, which is not initially displayed, appears, i.e. materializes, at all. In making the rejections, it would appear likely that the Examiner has adopted interpretation (1), when in fact, the disclosed invention embraces, by its disclosure, interpretation (2).

In accordance with the present invention, the event production square appears on the route only when a peculiar value is controlled to reach a predetermined value. In contrast, all of the event production squares in Darrow (and as modified by Hasbro Interactive) have already been displayed on the screen since the game start (see FIG. 1). For example, when a player wants to make the event "Community Chest" occur in the game according to Darrow, the player must simply make his character stop on the square corresponding to "Community Chest" (a square indicated "No.7" of FIG. 1). However, according to the present invention, two steps are required to make the event happen. At the first step, as no event production square is yet displayed on the route, the player must make the event production square corresponding to "Community Chest" appear on the route. The appearance, i.e., the materialization of this event production square, is achieved when a condition is satisfied, that is, the added peculiar value, obtained by adding each peculiar value corresponding to squares his/her character has previously stopped on, reaches the requisite predetermined value. Only after the event production square materializes, can the second step be attempted. In the second step, if the player can make his character stop on the displayed event production square, the event "Community Chest" is produced.

According to the Examiner, Darrow, in combination with Hasbro Interactive, discloses that the appearance of the event production square is controlled based on the peculiar value corresponding to each square. However, all of the event

production squares in Darrow are displayed from the start of the game. While a visual appearance may be adjusted in Darrow, the event production square is already displayed on the route from the game start. Darrow, and therefore also the combination of cited references, fails to disclose subject matter relating to appearance timing of the event production square, i.e., whether or not the event production square will materialize on the simulated game board. By virtue of the claimed feature, a player can control whether the event production square is made to appear on the route and enjoy the game in order to satisfy the condition for the event production square to appear. Moreover, as the player must make his character stop on proper squares for displaying the event production square, as well as for subsequently producing the event, there are more chances that player's skill is required in the present invention than in accordance with Darrow and Hasbro Interactive. Therefore, the present invention can provide a more enjoyable and skillful game.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the rejected claims are not obvious in view of the cited references for the reasons stated above. Reconsideration of the rejections of claims 1, 4, 5 and 9-11 and their allowance are respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 3, 6/1, 6/2, 6/3, 6/4 and 6/5 are rejected as obvious over Darrow (US 2,026,082) in view of Hasbro Interactive in further view of Oshima et al. (US 5,601,487) under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Claims 7/6/1, 7/6/2, 7/6/3, 7/6/4 and 7/6/5 are rejected as obvious over Darrow (US 2,026,082) in view of Hasbro Interactive in

further view of Oshima et al. (US 5,601,487) and Stamper et al. (US 5,267,734) under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Claims 8/6/1, 8/6/2, 8/6/3, 8/6/4 and 8/6/5 are rejected as obvious over Darrow (US 2,026,082) in view of Hasbro Interactive in further view of Oshima et al. (US 5,601,487) under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). The applicant herein respectfully traverses these rejections.

As noted above, the invention according to independent claims 1 and 3, from which these rejected claims depend, materialization of at least one event production square on the route is controlled based on a peculiar value relating to event production corresponding to the attributes of the squares based on a stop position of the character. Applicants respectfully submit that neither Oshima et al. nor Stamper et al. provide such disclosure that is lacking in both Darrow and Hasbro Interactive, as discussed above, and as clarified by the present claim amendments. Therefore, the rejected dependent claims derive patentability at least in part from claims 1 and 3 from which they depend, as well as from the additional recitations they contain.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the rejected claims are not obvious in view of the cited references for the reasons stated above. Reconsideration of the rejections of claims 2, 3, 6/1, 6/2, 6/4, 6/5, 7/6/1, 7/6/2, 7/6/3, 7/6/4, 7/6/5, 8/6/1, 8/6/2, 8/6/3, 8/6/4 and 8/6/5 and their allowance are respectfully requested.

In light of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in proper form for allowance of all claims and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 10-1250.

Respectfully submitted,
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